

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

news release

For Release December 22, 1978

## ENDANGERED SPECIES COMMITTEE SCHEDULES JANUARY 8 HEARINGS ON TELlico AND GRAYROCKS

The Congressionally created Endangered Species Committee will sponsor public hearings January 8, 1979, to receive public comment and substantive testimony on two projects which are before the Committee for consideration of possible exemptions from requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

The two projects are Tellico Dam and Reservoir on the Little Tennessee River in Tennessee and the Grayrocks Dam and Reservoir on the Laramie River in Wyoming. Hearings on the Tellico project will be held in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Washington, D.C.; the hearings on Grayrocks will be held in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Washington, D.C. Notice of the hearings was published in the December 22, 1978, Federal Register by Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus, who is by law the Chairman of the Endangered Species Committee.

The cabinet-level Committee was created by the Endangered Species Act Amendments of 1978, which directed it to review applications for exemption of federally sponsored projects where irresolvable conflict exists between the projects and protection of endangered species and their habitats. Congress directed the Committee to consider the Grayrocks and Tellico projects within 90 days of the law enactment, or by February 9, 1979. The Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that the completion of the Tellico project will cause the extinction of the endangered snail darter and that the Grayrocks project is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the endangered whooping crane and modify its critical habitat.

Permanent Committee members are the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary of Agriculture, Secretary of the Army, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors, Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The seventh member of the Committee is appointed by the President for each project after recommendations by the Governors of the affected States.

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The Chairman of the Endangered Species Committee solicits the following substantive information on both projects: the availability of reasonable and prudent alternatives to the projects, and the nature and extent of the benefits of the projects and of alternative courses of action consistent with preserving the endangered species or their habitats; (2) whether or not the projects are in the public interest; and (3) reasonable mitigation and enhancement measures which could be considered by the Committee.

The hearings will be held at the following locations:

Tellico Dam and Reservoir Project:

9 a.m.

University of Tennessee  
College of Law  
Moot Courtroom  
1505 W. Cumberland Avenue  
Knoxville, Tenn.

1 p.m.

Department of the Interior  
Auditorium  
18th & C Streets, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

Grayrocks Dam and Reservoir Project:

9 a.m.

Ramada Inn Conference Room  
3839 E. Lincoln Way  
Cheyenne, Wyo.

9 a.m.

Department of the Interior  
Auditorium  
18th & C Streets, N.W.  
Washington, D.C.

In addition to oral comments made at the public hearings the Committee will consider written comments and information which address these issues. Written information must be submitted for the Committee's review no later than January 10, 1979.

Oral presentations may be scheduled in advance by contacting the following Administrative Law Judges:

Knoxville Hearing: David Torbett, Knoxville, Tenn., 615/637-8060.

Cheyenne Hearing: Keith L. Burrows, Billings, Mont., 406/657-6615.

Washington Hearings: Joseph E. McGuire, Washington, D.C. 202/557-9200.

Written comments should be submitted to Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus, Chairman, Endangered Species Committee, Room 4160, Interior Building, Washington, D.C. 20240.

Further information may be obtained from Raphaelle Semmes, Room 4160, Interior Building, Washington, D.C. 20240, 202/343-5978.